

# **Regular Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee**

**Tuesday, January 10, 2012, 6:00 PM**

**Jenks/JMW Complex for the Performing and Visual Arts media Center**

**350 Division Street, Pawtucket RI 02860**

## **I Meeting will come to order**

**The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.**

### **a. Roll call**

**Mr. Araujo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Mr. Noonan-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Spooner-absent; Mr. Tenreiro-here**

**Ms. Bonollo arrived at 6:03 PM.**

**Also in attendance were Mrs. Deborah Cylke, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Kimberly Mercer-Dellith, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum Instruction and Assessment; Mr. Thomas Conlon, Business Administrator, Ms. Margaret Baker, Assistant Business Administrator and Ms. Vicki Bejma, Legal Counsel for the School Committee.**

### **b. Pledge of Allegiance**

**The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Chairman.**

**Mr. Tenreiro: I'd like to welcome everyone here and taking the time to be here this evening.**

## **II Recognition/Celebration**

### **• Agnes Little Choir**

**Mrs. Cylke: We are honored to have Mr. Dupre here with his choir. I was proud to have them perform at the State Capital recently and Mr. Dupre sent me a CD. I had also said at our last meeting that we would**

have to have them come and perform for us so here they are tonight.  
I'm so glad to see the parents in the audience.

I'd also like to publicly thank Mr. Dupre. He is multi talented and we appreciate him being here tonight.

The Agnes Little Choir performed three songs.

Mrs. Cylke: Thank you. I would like to come by with a healthy snack to celebrate.

The Chairman allowed for a two minute recess so that the students could clear the immediate area at 6:15 PM.

The Chairman called the meeting back to order at 6:17 PM.

### **III Student Representatives**

#### **a. Charles E. Shea—Anton and Liana**

Anton: Our basketball team is five and one having lost to North Providence.

Liana: Starting today, we are helping the ESL students with organizing their portfolios.

Anton: Our swim team is competitive and has won many events. The semester ends on the 25th and our portfolios are due so some of us are very nervous.

Liana: The Drama Club has an upcoming performance of Cinderella and tickets will be going on sale soon.

Anton: Another fundraiser is the folklore dance cards.

Liana: The Senior Super is next Thursday at the Riviera in East Providence. Ticket sales are slow, but we are motivated.

Anton: The Sophomore Class is having a fundraiser tonight. Unfortunately, we cannot be there, but we'd rather be here.

**Liana: For our New York trip 50% of the fundraising is done, but we are still selling scarves and raffle tickets and the proceeds from Cinderella will be going towards the trip.**

**Anton: We are selling calendars for \$10. Each sale goes towards a prize and everyday in February a ticket is drawn and someone will win a prize.**

**Liana: The Key Club is doing a clothes drive where you drop off your winter clothes and we will go to a nonprofit organization and it will be passed it out to those in need.**

**Mr. Coughlin: What about Zydeco?**

**Anton: I know you really want to do that.**

**Mr. Araujo: When is Cinderella?**

**Liana: February 10, 2012.**

**Anton: Thank you and have a great one.**

**b. William E. Tolman—Jerilyn and Karina**

**None**

**c. Jacqueline M. Walsh—Destiny and Michael**

**Michael: This year the senior dance recital the dancers were happy that other majors decided to rehearse.**

**We have had the Love, Labours, Lost auditions and had 40 kids audition today. About thirty of those weren't theater majors. The production will be held March 8, 9 and 10, 2012. It collaborates with the music department. It's a lot different than any play we've done so far at the school.**

**Destiny: We have the "Save the Bay Blue Water Challenge" going on right now. This is where you make a video or poster advocating**

conserving water and it's to raise awareness for conserving water and saving the bay. There's a possible prize for the winner in different categories i.e. video, poster.

Michael: We also have the Shakespeare monologue competition for the juniors and seniors. The Poetry Out Loud competition is coming up. You pick poems and compete in front of the entire school. There are a lot of judges who are the teachers and possibly a student this year and you go on to the State level. A senior this year went to the State level for it last year and excelled. It's interesting to see which poems they do and how well they do.

Destiny: We have some fundraising events coming up. We have roller skating night that we'll probably hold at USA Skates and movie night. The Travel Club had a bon voyage dinner where we had a raffle and food, it was a pot luck and we talked about our trip. We have 39 days left till we leave. It's pretty exciting! Thank you.

#### **IV Public Participation**

Mrs. Michelle de Jesus: Thank you. I'm glad to be here and hear what's going on. Last month I came and expressed my concern about buses dropping off kids 15 minutes before school starts. It's a huge concern for me. Kids shouldn't be allowed to be left unsupervised. I'm asking to get it on the agenda. I'm sure parents aren't aware that when parents put their children on the school bus they are not aware that this is happening. Thank you.

#### **V Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes: 12/13/11 and 01/03/12**

Ms. Bonollo moved to approve the previous meeting's minutes of

**12/13/11 and 01/03/12. Mr. Noonan seconded.**

**Voice vote all in favor.**

**Mr. Tenreiro: If no one objects, I'd like to move item New Business e. Request to Develop Alternative Suspension Policy—Pawtucket School Department Assistant Principals, if that is acceptable. Moving to New Business e. Request to Develop Alternative Suspension Policy**

**Mrs. Cylke: Our Assistant Principals at our various schools Cindy Voss and Dave Geraghty; Debra Westgate-Silva; Michael Gilmore; Liz Fasterson.**

**For the last year and a half I've met with our assistant principals and having been an assistant principal myself, it's a very challenging job. Learning to become a principal yourself and dealing with the daily discipline of the students very consistently the assistant principals have discussed some of their major challenges. We were looking at some of our positive alternatives to suspension and they will share with you what their concept is and what they are looking for tonight as they proceed to prepare a policy draft and come back to you.**

**Mr. Geraghty: Thank you, Superintendent Cylke. As Mrs. Cylke has stated, we have been meeting for about a year and a half about the day to day grind of dealing with students from as low as the elementary level and as they proceed to the high school level. One of the things that always comes back is that there are suspensions with children in crisis and the families tend to be linked into that and we work very diligently into that to try to get the kids back on track and back in the classroom knowing that they have to be accountable to**

deal with the consequences of discipline with kids in the building. We've gone back and forth on the issue and the key here is to reduce the time out of the classroom, involving more parental involvement and to focus on educational skill building instead of being punitive in nature and having the student stay away from school, it doubles up on the student instruction and takes away from the time having to play catch up for the next couple of weeks and they're always behind in what they do.

We've talked to the Superintendent about putting forth a Saturday or evening program in lieu of long term suspension where students are away from school for five to ten days at a time which really puts them behind. We can look at some alternatives such as skill building, parental involvement, and legal aspects as to what is going on with the students and how to get them back on track and build a positive relationship to get them to be successful in the classroom. It's not going to do away with suspension and I can only speak on behalf of Shea when I say there were 194 days last year of student suspended days. If we can work with the students, work with the parents and the members of this community to get the students back on track it gets them that much further to a greater chance at being successful.

Mrs. Westgate-Silva: At the end of the month I'm going to be going to training in Boston. It's a train the trainer model that basically works on deescalation skills and de-escalating a potentially volatile situation.

The alternative suspension I can say at the middle school level many times we have parents who come in who are also struggling with the same issues we are seeing in the school and they are asking for help

and they don't know where to go. We feel that this program would help to build the skills not only parents and children and the school working together so we would be working on skills such as conflict resolution, anger management and communication skills. So it's not only a punitive action, but we're building a skill so that the student won't repeat the same kind of behaviors.

Mr. Noonan: Are there other school districts that are doing this?

Mrs. Cylke: I'm not aware of Rhode Island. What we shared was in my previous district, we had an alternative suspension where instead of being out for five days there was still a cool down period. A student would go home, but there was a balance.

In my mind, what we have is that the teachers get punished twice. Not only are they dealing with the infraction in the classroom, but when the student returns and is behind five days, the student comes back and says okay I'm back where's my work, but instead the student has some skill building skills, conflict resolution skills, anger management—alternatives to suspensions such as this. To answer your question yes, there are districts that have alternatives to suspensions.

Mr. Noonan: How did you find it worked in your other school district?

Mrs. Cylke: It got parents involved and when you're giving a choice that you're about to be suspended for two to three days or come to our skill building, and we'll have your child back to school much sooner parents chose that.

Mr. Noonan: You found it to be effective:

**Mrs. Cylke: Absolutely.**

**Mr. Tenreiro: I'm sure you will bring something back to the Committee.**

## **VI Presentation(s) – Discussion Items**

### **a. Charles E. Shea NEASC Presentation - Shea NEASC Committee Chairs**

**Mrs. Cylke: I'd like to introduce Shea's High School Principal, Dr. Chris Lord and no doubt one goal every School Committee has for each of their high schools is for those schools to reach accreditation.**

**This team is to be commended for earning their ten year accreditation. I would also like to recognize Grace and Anna. Grace and Anna were the co-chairs. This is a tremendous amount of work. Many, many hours of work by the co-chairs and the other members go into this.**

**Dr. Lord: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to share the next step of our accreditation process. Grace and Anna are going to share a three year analysis of what we were, where we've been, what we are and where we are going. Last May a team came from all over New England and we are going to talk about what we were, where we've been, what we are and where we are going. We are going to highlight for you what we need do to keep this school moving into the future.**

**There were a lot of folks involved in this presentation and you have already met Grace Malkasian and Anna Grady, there are co-chairs.**

**There are seven standards in which NEASC evaluates to award a school accreditation.**



**Our first standard is our mission statement which consists of our core beliefs, values and learning expectations. Paul Jennings handled that.**

**Our second standard is curriculum which is what we do every day and received the most accreditation. We worked very closely with Central Office and Kim Mercer and Gail Mulligan and worked very hard to establish our course assessment and Mike Cordeiro will be sharing that.**

**We hit the ground running with our third standard, instruction and Marion Phillips and Cecilia Bernardo did a great job with that.**

**Standard four is the most difficult standard and that is assessment of students and we are trying to find out if they know what we want them to know. That one is the real tricky one and Sherri Belanger and Joel Gardner will be presenting that to you.**

**Leadership and Culture is the fifth standard and Mr. Cookson has done an extraordinary job with that.**

**The sixth standard is school resources and it is all about support and Mr. Geraghty will be looking at that and what is going on around the school and looking at students with their special needs.**

**He will also be sharing with you the part about community resources which is the last standard.**

**A power point presentation began:**

**Dr. Lord: In 2002 there were 24 commendations. This year there were 34 commendations.**

**In 2002 there were 102 recommendations. The School was put on probation. Things needed to be addressed. I was hired in August**

and by October 1st all recommendations were met and Shea had full accreditation back and was taken off probation. This year there were 41 recommendations.

There are four levels of accreditation and we are next to the highest and we have to take action by November 1, 2012 and we have already met two of them.

It all starts here with our mission statement.

**Standard #1 Mr. Jennings:** In preparing for this NEASC visit, we were giving the opportunity to change our mission statement. Before this our mission statement had been different. We were given the opportunity to make one that was tailored for Shea High School and our population so we are faced with the task of determining what truly was the mission statement was for Shea High School. What we developed was for “We R Shea High.” What we were really gratified to see is that NEASC actually put it up on their web site.

**Commendation:** The deliberate and collaborative effort used to establish clear and well defined core values, beliefs about student learning, and 21st century learning expectations: Shea’s Model Mission at [www.neasc.org](http://www.neasc.org).

**Recommendation:** Clarify existing or develop new school-wide analytic rubrics that specifically and explicitly measure student performance of the academic, civic and social expectations as defined in the school’s statement of core values, beliefs and learning expectations

We are already starting to work on that and we are already developing school wide rubrics and also going to Brockton and really be able to

**see how they make these school wide rubrics.**

**Dr. Lord: Brockton has done a great job with this. They have a process of writing school wide rubrics that is a long term goal and will be assessed.**

**Standard #2 Mr. Cordeiro: Curriculum was pretty easy because the school and the district had already started the process. They used the understanding by design model where the GSE's were aligned to the standards. We have school wide rubrics and also their tied scores are one, two, three, and four. You would be amazed at how many districts are still not aligned yet.**

**Commendation: Clear, concise and well-aligned curriculum documents that include grade span expectations (GSEs) and the school's 21st century learning expectations highlighted in the course description.**

**Recommendations: Implement a data-driven system of curriculum review, including data analysis of the NECAP test scores and the data from baseline testing throughout the curriculum. Provide appropriate technology to support the curriculum and classroom instruction.**

**Standard #3 Ms. Philips: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. As you know I had the pleasure of serving on this committee as a co-chair and Cecilia was one of my most valuable members of that committee.**

**Commendation: The individual teachers who enhance their own learning through personal professional development**

**The teachers who use scaffolding and group strategies to enhance instruction and provide differentiation**

**As you know Shea High School is a community of many different types of learners so I think these commendations speak to every teacher at Shea High.**

**Ms. Bernardo:**

**The recommendation is the easy part. We have some really good instructional strategies but we can do a better job in research based and those words should be underlined and highlighted.**

**Recommendation:**

**Provide professional development for all teachers to become proficient in current research based instructional strategies.**

**Dr. Lord: We will start a consistency model for all writing throughout the school and Anna from our English Department said to establish the same type of grading method to use throughout the school regardless of where kids get their writing assessment.**

**Standard # 4 Mr. Gardner: Our team and all the teams worked really hard at all the tasks they had to do. We divided all of our indicators up and our teams up into teams of two. They had to go around the school and find different assessment areas in certain content area to determine and interpret the data in a format that would be acceptable to you. It was kind of like finding a moving target to find what you needed to get sometimes with everyone doing the same thing. I'm really proud of what the entire school accomplished.**

**Commendation:**

**The consistency with which teachers clearly define and communicate course specific learning expectations to students prior to summative assessments**

**What that is really saying is what the teacher is teaching the student and that the student understands before learning the task.**

**The school practice of tracking and pooling data on student proficiency with regard to each academic expectation and the decisions driven by that data.**

**This is equivalent to data from grade tests, NECAP tests, and access tests and we analyze and use the results of this analysis along with the results from Central Office to adjust and modify curriculum for structural practices.**

**Recommendation: Develop and implement a plan to ensure professional staff employs a formal process, bases on school-wide analytic rubrics, to assess whole school and individual student progress in achieving in the school's 21st century learning expectations.**

**This wasn't a surprise to us. We knew this was going to be an issue. School wide rubrics, there are a lot of districts still working on the same types of things we are—specific rubrics assignment and content specific rubrics. We need to develop rubrics and practice specific school wide rubrics and develop protocols we then need to assess the student's progress.**

**Dr. Lord: There are two show case schools chosen every year and this year we were one of them. Parents see their students are progressing and not just by a letter grade but they also see how they are progressing in their writing skills or their method of standards in reading.**

**Standard #5 Mr. Cookson: Good evening, my name is Mike Cookson**

and I'm a teacher at Shea High School and I was the chair of the leadership and culture component. Like everyone else we had a phenomenal team that we worked with. It started with a lot of research but it was enlightening that the conversations that resulted from it and the professional development and collaboration that developed from it was incredible. It's a way to acknowledge your strengths and see your faults and take a look at the way you do things.

**Commendation:** The creation of career pathways and academies that support the various learning needs of the diverse student population. That's what we find Mike Connolly the Administrator of Government Academies of several learning academies throughout the district. That was one of the things that the NEASC group was extremely impressed with. They felt that this addressed various learning styles, different student's needs that can be identified through just one of these types of learning processes as well as the active advisory program. It's nice to have an adult advocate in the classroom. You get to know more about the student, about their learning style and probably more than you wanted to, but you get to help them out and that was one of the things we were cited for.

**Recommendation:** Increase the availability of heterogeneous classes in core subject areas for all students. One of the things that they were most critical about was our continual schedule change. Our seniors have had three schedule changes in the last four years and this has been something of an issue. NEASC cited that as something in our conversation that we need to have a flexible schedule, but

something that is a little bit more consistent.

Also to develop and implement a plan to ensure students have full and equitable access to all courses in the school's curriculum. By having a schedule that is flexible they can sign up for classes that meet the graduation requirements throughout and meet their own personal interest as well. Those are the things we were directed to improve upon over the next couple of years.

Mr. Tenreiro: Dr. Lord, do you know why they said to increase the availability of heterogeneous classes in the recommendation?

Dr. Lord: Why they did this is because we have one group of kids that stay together all day and really don't have much of a high school career so they need more of a range and the interest to vary their ability. The homogeneous class stay with each other all day while the heterogeneous establish a classroom that is more of a mix and expose themselves to more of a real life experience when they leave. We are trying to support that. We all don't live on one block, we live in a community.

Mr. Tenreiro: How many levels are there?

Dr. Lord: Well you have your honors level. But you have many cohorts of students. You can split that high level into two groups but you may not have the same students in each group. You can have different cohorts in each group. We try to make as variable as possible. An ELL one will stay with that same group until English and once they are out of that structure it will be a PE and it might not be planned.

Ms. Grady: This was a major concern for the committee. Several

times we tried to explain our ESL program and we need an intervention program for ninth graders which is a college curriculum but it is a sheltered class to help them with their reading. So they were not seeing that was a college class with reading support. They were seeing that we were trapping lower level students which is not the case.

Dr. Lord: Whenever you build a master schedule, you build it with the reading variable based on students reading from K through 12. So it's very difficult to have a student who is reading a first second and third grade level in a classroom with a student reading at a fourth grade reading level and high school level.

Ms. Nordquist: We just had a meeting where I finished doing my student teaching and I sat through many meetings regarding Core beliefs and believe me I understand what you went through and how much work you put into this inside the room and outside the classroom for the students so thank you for your hard work. It doesn't go unnoticed.

Standard #6 Mr. Geraghty:

Commendation: The development of a wide array of intervention programs along with necessary program informational pamphlets and/or applications.

When you look at the spectrum of the students that we deal with, I think we offer the interventions and the accessibility itself that are students are appropriately placed. Where they need to be educationally, and get them the support services they need in their classroom to our special education team who meets on Monday and



**makes sure the students are appropriately placed in their educational IEP meetings. I could talk about the school guidance counselors, social workers, support staff, the interventions that happen with them right down to our school nurse. We involve an entire concept that we are a village. We embrace that. There is a lot of open communication with different venues in the building and how we best suit those student needs. Right down to the teacher support team. How do we assist teachers as colleagues to make sure that we are doing the right thing and reaching those kids to being the best that they can be?**

**Recommendation: Outline information about intervention services on the school's website with a brief description of each program.**

**Once we get the website up and running that is going to be a key piece of one of our links we have that our parents can go through our parent portal and directly see the access of what services are available for their students.**

**Standard #7 Mr. Geraghty: Community and resources are those things we do outside of the school and the things we have to do to maintain the building itself.**

**Commendation: Partnerships with community, business, and higher education. Our Upward Bound students are deeply rooted to Rhode Island College. They spend weekends there throughout the course of the school year. There's a summer program there. There's an interview process just for the students to get involved with the families and how we best place those students in school and what we can do to get them to that higher level.**

**Our explorers program in Science—they come in on a regular basis**

and meet with the students who stay after school. They come straight from PC and again they come back and work with us and our link to the students.

We go back to our Public Administration Academy and Roger Williams University is a very good source and come in on a regular basis. Our students are there and we place students in City Hall and in Parks and Recreation. We have students in Family Court working out into the field. Our internship field working into public administration speaks too many of those aspects. Our kids go many times per week and there from 1:00 PM on the early release days.

Recommendation: Ensure that maintenance requests are addressed in a consistent and timely manner.

Right now it is under revision and we have gone through some changes with that. Mr. Rebelo has taken the lead and it's been very streamlined and has taken the issues and we take the maintenance requests and get back to the teachers as quickly as possible to make sure that the building is adequately lit, heated, and accommodating for everyone to be in school.

Dr. Lord: One of the things that we need to do is something like this. It's a behavior rubric. It outlines issues with respect in every quarter.

Every student who makes the behavior honor roll gets a ticket to the Paw Sox on May 9th. If they have exceeded their goals, their family will receive tickets and they will be recognized at the game that day.

Mr. Noonan: Other than ESL how do you feel about the fairness of the process, do you have any other criticism about some of the

recommendations?

**Ms. Grady:** I think it's a good process. It's a bit of a dinosaur process. They come for three or four days and read our report. I think that the process could be reviewed and they would come more often.

**Mr. Cookson:** One concern we had was the teachers sent were not generally teachers that were used to working in a community like Pawtucket. Only about two were from similar communities to that of Pawtucket. The others came from more affluent communities.

**Dr. Lord:** The Chair coached them in a fair way. There were some misconceptions. They came up with reasonable recommendations.

**Mrs. Cylke:** I really loved your answer dinosaur. It's a great debate about the whole accreditation process. Checking on a system every ten years—with today's technology, and today's accountability system, improvement is not a static process. Its dynamic and its ongoing. This should be ongoing versus every ten years. The political problem for School Committees is do you move away from a system where your high schools are not getting accredited? Most School Committees don't want to take that step because they don't like that label. I think the data systems, the accountability we have in place are going to allow us to continuously improve without this ten year review. If you took all these standards and put them on one cycle we would go crazy. I appreciate your response.

**Mrs. Malkasian:** We the faculty at Shea wanted to take the opportunity to especially thank Superintendent Cylke, Deputy Superintendent Mercer, and the Central Office Staff and of course this

**School Committee for all of its support for this long arduous process which was a happy ending for us. Thank you very much we appreciate your support.**

**Ms. Grady: I don't think I could have been a success in this process and taken on this leadership role if it wasn't for Dr. Lord. He comes here a lot and praises the teachers and students and I don't know how often anyone comes here and says that to him. I just want to say that publicly, thank you.**

**Dr. Lord: I want to thank the whole team for coming here and all the hard work they put into this.**

**b. Pawtucket Teachers Alliance Request for Insurance Coverage Policy Change—Pawtucket Teachers Alliance**

**Mrs. Cylke: This is a presentation item and not a voting item. The Pawtucket Teachers Alliance requested the School Committee enter into a Memorandum of Agreement to extend family healthcare benefits to teachers who have domestic partners. The Pawtucket Teachers Alliance requested the presentation to be in executive session and legal counsel felt that couldn't happen. Our legal counsel is here this evening if you have any questions.**

**Mr. Beaupre: Thank you Superintendent Cylke, Chairman Tenreiro and Members of the School Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to bring this before you this evening. I am not actually going to present this I am going to turn this over to over to the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance Attorney, Mr. Scott Bielecki.**

**Mr. Bielecki: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak regarding this request. What we**

have distributed is a copy of the letter sent to Mr. Spooner in September and a copy of the proposed agreement as well as a copy of a proposed affidavit that would be used to support somebody's claim that they were in a domestic partnership that would qualify for in the event that the Committee would agree to enter into the Memorandum of Agreement. Also included is a copy of the current contract language regarding family healthcare benefits that will help us talk about why this Memorandum of Agreement is needed. The last document you have is a copy of the RI General Law that defines the term dependents for the purposes of providing who's covered in regards to State Employees.

It's the Pawtucket Teachers Alliances position that that statute reflects the public policy in the State of Rhode Island regarding the propriety of affording coverage to people who have domestic partners. That statute is also provided to show you how we crafted the proposed language which is intended to mirror the same types of basis which need to be touched in order to establish a domestic partnership.

I'd like to talk about the mechanics of what has been proposed as far as what the proposal is. I would then like to explain why I feel the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance feels it's appropriate for this Committee to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement extending family health benefits to teachers who have domestic partners.

In order to understand the request, it's important to look first at who has family health care benefits under the current contract language. Presently current health care benefits are provided on a family basis

to married certifiable licensed personnel. Administration has taken the position that bases upon that contract language, their hands are essentially tied without some modification as far as the capacity to honor or request a teacher with a domestic partner for a family to receive or request benefits for that same sex partner.

What we have proposed for the memorandum of agreement is that the benefit specified in that section pertaining to family with benefits be extended to teachers who either have same sex or opposite sex domestic partners provided the following conditions are satisfied: that the domestic partner share a common residence and were to have resided together for at least one year; neither of the domestic partners are married to anyone else; both domestic partners are at least 18 years of age; that the partners are not related by blood closer than would bar a marriage in the state of legal residence; and the partners have executed a domestic partnership affidavit that has been appended to the agreement.

Those criteria mirror very closely the criteria that appear in RI General Law pertaining to who would be entitled to obtain domestic partnership coverage for State Employees.

Singularly, the affidavit that is attached to it lists all those criteria and also provides for the teacher who is seeking to have a domestic partner covered to provide certain pieces of evidence in order to qualify for the coverage. The teacher would have to provide two or four things. Either domestic partnership agreement or relationship contract; evidence of a joint mortgage or evidence of joint ownership of a primary residence; joint ownership of a vehicle; joint checking

account; a joint credit account or a joint lease and the fourth evidence they could use is that the domestic partner has been designated as a beneficiary for the employee's will, retirement contract.

It's the belief that the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance that the present language in the contract does not provide for coverage for domestic partners is a result of language that has existed in that contract for such a long period of time that I don't believe any leadership of the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance can tell you when it was put in there. It is extraordinarily old language which as a consequence the teachers believe that the result that was reached by Administration was a result that was a consequence that was a conscious decision on the part of the Committee to deny benefits with teachers with domestic partners and is more a result of language that has existed for so long that no one has had the opportunity to evaluate or deal with that it was presently having on teachers with domestic partners.

As a result, the Alliance believes the more effective manner in dealing with it was to come to the Committee, point out what has happened in regard to the application of that language and deal with it in the most direct way we see possible; which is to simply enter into a memorandum of agreement.

The teachers' request is supported by what they feel to be public policy in this state that favors domestic partnership coverage. That policy in the teachers' eyes is reflected by the RI General Laws which provides domestic partnership coverage to State Employees. The State Employees who are able to claim benefits for their domestic

partners would have to meet the same types of criteria that have been proposed by the teachers here. Similarly an affidavit would have to be executed by the teachers seeking to have domestic partnership coverage extended. In addition to the State of Rhode Island, many neighboring communities throughout the state have provided for benefits for teachers with domestic partners in their collective bargaining agreements. Similarly, in those collective bargaining agreements in those neighboring towns that border Pawtucket have in fact adopted domestic coverage for their teachers. That would include Central Falls, Cumberland, Lincoln and Providence. In addition, domestic partnership coverage is provided in West Warwick, Johnston, Exeter West Greenwich, South Kingstown and we believe the bargaining agreement by the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative.

Further evidence of what the teachers consider to be an anonymous result is language that has been in the contract for so long that people have not paid conscious attention to it. It is the teachers' understanding that other municipals employees in the City of Pawtucket actually receive domestic healthcare benefits under a family basis both the municipal employees and I believe, the F. O. P. In view of all of those facts, the teachers feel strongly that there is a public policy that would support their request for domestic partnership coverage. One thing I'm going to anticipate is whether or not the new laws have been passed regarding civil unions would undercut the need for this type of coverage for domestic partners or somehow mitigate the teachers claim that state recognizes a public



policy favoring benefits for teachers who have domestic partners. The thing that I would note is that the time when the Civil Unions Law was enacted there was no change whatsoever in the State's handling of healthcare for their employees of domestic partnership coverage. I believe that the fact that the law was left untouched in regard to State Employees affording coverage to people who have domestic partnership coverage speaks loudly to the fact that not only should teachers of civil unions be afforded coverage for their partners, but also as a matter of policy, teachers who are in a committed relationship with domestic partners should also be afforded coverage.

I would note that by proposing that an affidavit be signed and that certain criteria be met with the teachers who would avail themselves of this type of benefit are engaged in a relationship sufficient gravity in order to justify their claim that their partner should be afforded family healthcare benefits. We take it very seriously those teachers who avail that they are in a committed relationship be able to justify it.

It's the teachers' position that current application of the language has led to a result that creates an inequity between some of its members. This is a request to remedy that inequity. We would like to be clear that the teachers come to you not for any specific individual but instead on behalf of their entire membership.

As a matter of fairness and equity the members feel it is advisable that you enter into this Memorandum of Agreement. We are hopeful in view of the history of the cooperation that the Pawtucket Teachers

**Alliance and the Committee will look upon this request favorably.**

**Mr. Coughlin: It's been broadcast a number of times that it is the teachers' position. Have the teachers taken a vote on this?**

**Mr. Beaupre: No, we have not.**

**Mr. Coughlin: So at this time it's just a leadership position?**

**Mr. Beaupre: Yes.**

**Mr. Noonan: Do you construe this September 15th, 2011 letter to Mr. Spooner as an invitation to re-open the contract?**

**Mr. Bielecki: No, I do not. Mr. Beaupre was very specific in his letter that this was not an invitation to re-open the contract. This letter is only an invitation to request this specific issue as a matter of policy for this specific Memorandum of Agreement. It is not an invitation to re-open any other issue.**

**Mr. Noonan: To me this has to be an amendment to the collective bargaining agreement. It's not going to be a Memorandum of Understanding and that means you're going to have to re-open it to amend it.**

**Mr. Bielecki: I believe it can be done by a Memorandum of Understanding but instead where I would propose is that it is a matter of procedure that the Committee believes this needs to be discussed as to how this would be approached. I propose that it be discussed in closed session or with a sub-committee of the Committee.**

**Mr. Noonan: I just wanted to get how you construe this because I read it a certain way.**

**Mr. Bielecki: The way I read it is I construe it as a request to enter into this Memorandum of Agreement solely.**

**Mr. Noonan: Thank you.**

## **VII Old Business – Action Item(s)**

### **a. Updated Emergency Management Plan Approval**

**Mrs. Cylke: I would like to introduce Mr. Bob Howe. Mr. Howe is retired from service with the City and was here with us in June and he is back here with us tonight.**

**Mr. Howe: Good evening Superintendent Cylke, ladies and gentlemen. After many months of working on this plan and coming back and forth and looking at the needs of the Pawtucket School Department's safety; issues with regards to national disasters, manmade disasters, violent crimes and everyday operations of the Pawtucket School District a plan has been presented to the Pawtucket School Committee for hopefully final passage to implement with the agreement of the Superintendent and School Committee and parties thereof. This plan has been reviewed by the Police Chief, Paul King with his blessing. I believe everybody here has reviewed each portion of this plan and I would ask for a motion of approval of passage.**

**Mr. Noonan moved to approve and implement the Pawtucket School Department School Emergency Preparedness Plan, September, 2011.**

**Mr. Coughlin seconded.**

**Mr. Araujo: Great job, Mr. Howe. I like what you've done with this emergency plan. The only thing I would like to see is with the emergency kits I would like to see that added to the annual check list at the beginning of the school year to make sure all of our students have what they need.**

**Mr. Howe:** I agree with you, Mr. Araujo. Especially with our student population, everything from food supplies to medical supplies. We want to make sure that we don't put in any type of thing where we put a food item that where there is an emergency situation and there is a lock down situation and a student needs a snack and we put a food item in there and there is the potential for an allergic reaction so I think that we should definitely look at it, look at the population of our students and define medical problems of our students. That is also confidential so there is a very fine line. But once funding is available, I think we should look at something that is going to be user friendly, that's going to be universal and I think we can look at other school departments and see how their doing it.

**Mr. Araujo:** Great once we get the funding maybe we could have these put on the checklist and have it looked at every year that would be a good thing too.

**Mr. Howe:** I believe I put in there it should be looked at each year or at least every two years. Things change rapidly in society today as we know. It is easy to add, delete or tweak something if it's not working for the specifications for the school district and what really is right for the school district.

**Mr. Araujo:** It mentioned handling contaminated clothing. Do we currently have a bloodborne pathogen training program?

**Mrs. Cylke:** Yes when new employees come in they do. It's an OSHA requirement. Right, Ms. Mercer?

**Ms. Mercer:** Yes.

**Mr. Tenreiro:** I think this policy with this Committee is one of the

larger policies that has been put together and we should definitely establish some type of policy review calendar.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

## **VIII New Business – Action Items**

### **a. Appointments**

#### **1. Non Certified**

Mrs. Cylke: This evening we're asking for your approval for the following non certified employees:

Teacher Assistants/Building Assistants:

Erin Houle/Curtis

Deborah Krieger/Curtis

Maria Pinto/Baldwin

Nancy Charles/Curvin-McCabe

Lavanya Kotipalli/Curvin-McCabe

Jerilyn Peppes/Fallon

Personal Care Attendant:

Beverly Passarelli/Jenks

Ms. Nordquist moved to approve the non certified employees:

Teacher Assistants/Building Assistants: Erin Houle/Curtis; Deborah Krieger/Curtis; Maria Pinto/Baldwin; Nancy Charles/Curvin-McCabe; Lavanya Kotipalli/Curvin-McCabe; Jerilyn Peppes/Fallon; Personal Care Attendant: Beverly Passarelli/Jenks. Mr. Coughlin seconded.

Voice vote passed all in favor.

## **2. Coaching**

**Mrs. Cylke: This evening we're asking the Committee to approve the following coaching appointments:**

**Assistant Coach Girls' Indoor Track-Shea**

**Katie Desrosiers**

**Assistant Coach Boys' Indoor Track – Shea**

**Nicholas Lafreniere**

**Mr. Noonan moved to approve the coaching appointments of Assistant Coach Girls' Indoor Track-Shea, Katie Desrosiers and Assistant Coach Boys' Indoor Track – Shea, Nicholas Lafreniere. Mr. Coughlin seconded.**

**Voice vote passed all in favor.**

### **b. Approval of School Committee Code of Ethics**

**Mr. Tenreiro: It's been a bit of a journey here with a governance group to ensure that we have the most effective and productive meetings possible. Also that we establish a real vision and action plan for the district and it's important that we work together for the sake of the children in the district. Being united before a common vision is extremely important. This is the first step in that process.**

**Mrs. Cylke: Last year the Committee agreed to work with the Center for Reform of School Systems out of Texas and that is a company founded by Don McAdams. Don McAdams has been a long time School Committee Member and he wrote a book on "What Urban School Districts Do." He studied the practices of effectiveness of urban school districts.**

**We had our first work session and the Committee had an opportunity**

to review the code of ethics. In the future meetings Standards of Professional Practice, your vision and mission, your core beliefs and commitments and your theory of action to improve academic achievement were also the topics. That document tells you how you think, why you think that way and how you get your work done.

Based on the work from the first session there was work on the code of ethics and there was agreement on all but one. One needing revision not that anyone disagreed but more on the lines of wordsmithing.

Mr. Tenreiro: We'll keep this as the first reading and open it for discussion.

Mr. Coughlin: I've read it and I think it's very inspirational in nature, however, I'm concerned because the General Assembly in RI General Law Title 16-2-9.1 has given us a statute which mandates the way I'm reading it what the ethical conduct or ethical standard of a school district must be. It starts out by saying the School Committees shall adopt the following code which is the code of the statute. It doesn't say may or advisory. It says you are going to adopt this. The one that is here arguably contains some of the provisions also contained in the statute.

For that reason, this evening, I am going to have to vote no.

Mr. Noonan: I talked to David about this and the fact that it couldn't supplement or as long as it doesn't contradict we can enact and that will be my position when we come down to it. If we haven't done this yet according to statute then I think we should.

Mr. Tenreiro: Years ago, we did adopt this and it was on the books.

**Mr. Noonan:** Just so we're clear. I support this fully and will vote for it, because I don't think it violates the statute in any way, shape or form.

**Mr. Tenreiro:** I think it's given to us not just from the State but from a governance session one for us to own and have ownership over. I will have no problem attaching 16-9-2 because that is State Law that does govern that law of ethics.

**Ms. Nordquist:** Thank you, Mr. Noonan for standing up and saying that because we do recognize all RI General Laws but there are many of these issues that we're addressing here that have been a problem over the years with the way that individuals have acted. I think to put it forth and to set a code of conduct for ourselves is important.

**Mr. Tenreiro:** I think we can work this out now. It looks like we'll have another governance workshop before our February meeting,

**c. City of Pawtucket Arts Panel Review Committee Appointment**

**Mrs. Cylke:** I would like to recognize Dr. Cheryl McWilliams, she has been serving for the Pawtucket School Department representative on the Pawtucket Arts Panel Review Committee so I would like to acknowledge her many years of service. That term has expired and the City has asked us to appoint a new representative. I have personally spoken with Mr. John Haidemenos in light of his background in the arts and involvement here at the school. I think it would be wise to have him representing our school department.

I'm asking that you approve the appointment of Mr. John Haidemenos to the Pawtucket Arts Panel Review Committee.

**Mr. Coughlin** moved to approve the appointment of Mr. John



**Haidemenos to the Pawtucket Arts Panel Review Committee. Ms. Nordquist seconded.**

**Voice vote carried all in favor.**

**d. Communication—Request Meeting with City Council – Contract Approval Process**

**Mrs. Cylke: In November the voters approved an amendment to the City Charter and in that change they voted to give the City Council authority to approve contracts negotiated by the School Committee and the employee groups. Mr. Coughlin suggested that the School Committee contact the City Council and ask for a meeting because at this point and time we are in negotiations with our non certified union and next year we'll enter negotiations with the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance. We do not have any expectations, guidelines about the process or the timeline or any kind of clue as to what they are looking for. I would fully support Mr. Coughlin's request that we formally contact the City and ask for a meeting so that prior to going too far down the road, we know what they're thinking about in terms of what they would approve or disapprove.**

**Mr. Coughlin moved to formally contact the Pawtucket City Council requesting a meeting with the Pawtucket School Committee to discuss the contract approval process. Mr. Noonan seconded.**

**Ms. Nordquist: Are we asking for guidelines on how to negotiate?**

**Mrs. Cylke: No. The City Council has the authority to approve or disapprove a contract that you present to them. What we need to know in advance is we don't want to go through a lot of work and then find at the very end have them say that we're going to**

disapprove this because of a, b c and d.

What we'd like to have information about is what their expectations are prior to going that far and to work with our employee groups. The Teachers Alliance or our non-certified union and to work with these groups for months and only to have the City Council have the end product rejected. We're trying to avoid that. To go blindly forward without any indication from the City Council, I feel they have, unfortunately, the authority what you want to enter into an agreement with your unions.

Ms. Nordquist: I'm speaking out that I am not voting for this because I think we should go into negotiations with what we want to do and worry about that and what's best and not worry about it in advance what's going to appease the City Council that may or may not be there in the future. I understand the point, but I don't even think they have the guidelines of what their looking for. I don't feel the need to sit down and talk about what they would accept and wouldn't accept. I'm respectfully voting no.

Mr. Araujo: I actually support this Dave. I think it's important that we reach out to the City Council and see what there guidelines may be so we can expedite this process of negotiating. We don't want to go into a negotiation with a union and come to an agreement and have the City Council reject it and have to start the process again. Hopefully by us reaching out to the Council, they will accept that and we do have a meeting. Have we reached out before?

Mrs. Cylke: No.

Mr. Tenreiro: What changes have taken since the amendment has

passed and applied by the General Assembly so that's the atmosphere that we're under like it or not.

Mr. Coughlin: Just to reinforce what the Superintendent has been saying and Mr. Araujo has been saying and what I hear at RIASC when this comes up. The fact is if we don't take this step, and we go forward and we negotiate a contract and the City Council sits back and says thanks, but no thanks we are putting the credibility of this School Committee on the line. I think it would behoove us tremendously to know where the Council is coming from and we know what they are looking for as far as medical co-pays so we are in sync with the rest of the City's bargaining groups.

Ms. Nordquist: I have spent many hours sitting with the unions talking about the different contracts not to have the City Council come up and tell me no, I'm not going to approve that. If they are going to sit there and we're going to listen to them tell us what to do and how to negotiate then maybe they need to be informed about what goes on in the schools and why there are certain things in that contract.

Unfortunately, we have no say and this was politically motivated when it was put on the ballot. If we have to sit through a Council meeting and listen to everything they have to say and how they want things then I think they should have to sit through one of our meetings and listen to how everything is done here and what we have to say. I know I wouldn't want to be told and directed like a puppet by the City Council when I was voted to do something directed for the kids and that includes negotiating a contract.

**Mr. Araujo:** I don't interpret this meeting as being directed by but as getting a feeling of what direction they're heading into. We can negotiate in good faith and bring it to them. It may not be exactly what they are looking for but at least if we have some direction to get it passed. It's a fact that they do hold that final say.

**Mrs. Cylke:** I don't think they know what they are looking for. I think by asking we are saying we don't want the expectation of the Municipal contract to be different from that of a school district. I want to know that we are going to be treated fairly and equitably and when there is nothing that they have giving us, that's the part that worries me. They have this authority and power and we don't know anything about it.

**Roll call:**

**Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-no; Mr. Tenreiro-yes**

**Motion passed five in favor; one opposed.**

## **IX Superintendent's Report**

**Mrs. Cylke:** The Commissioner has approved my request for the Tolman and Shea transformation model. Ms. DiCenso and I have a meeting with RIDE officials tomorrow. I have spoken to Mr. Beaupre and immediately following we have set up a series of meetings with timelines and we have 120 days to come up with a plan.

**January 20th** Mr. St. Jean is moving to our new web site. It will be a work in progress. Some schools are more advanced than others but we're ready to make that transition.

**I would like the Committees input as to how you would like your page**

to look. The content you would like on your page. Meet the Committee we would have photos and a short bio and your contact information.

I'd like to announce that Joe Scallin will be retiring on February 15th. Mr. Scallin has served as our Director of Facilities. I will be bringing to our Committee a revised job description I do envision that the new position will be expanded to include addressing maintenance but also facilities as school projects. As you know we are entering Stage II of our facilities long range plan and MGT Corporation will be here next week to start a series of meetings regarding the educational specifications. Mr. Conlon had a bid review today and there were 14 vendors there. So we had a lot of architects to take a look at school health and safety issues.

In February, I will be attending an AASA conference. It's my yearly professional development trip. Its four days and this year it's in Houston. I also want to announce that in April the National School Boards Association will be in Boston and recently I've been able to identify funds. I would really like to open up the invitation to our School Committee Members if you can attend the full conference or perhaps one or two days. I know Mr. Coughlin will be attending as a representative of RIASC. It's quite an event. Its 10,000 -12,000 School Committee Members from all over the United States and they are high quality, excellent speakers.

We received a \$10,000 anonymous donation. The donor requested that \$5,000 be put to the Pawtucket School Department and spent in a way that I felt seemed appropriate and when I determine that I will

let you know. The other \$5,000 is to be given to our Tolman High School Football Program. When I spoke to the Tolman High School Coach, he was so excited. The State of Rhode Island has established new criteria for helmet safety and he stated he would put that towards that and Mr. Scanlon has been notified of that.

I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year. I'm looking forward to a great 2012.

#### **X Special Reports of School Committee Members**

**Mr. Araujo:** Thank you everybody who participated in this meeting. Have a good night.

**Ms. Bonollo:** Happy New Year and good night.

**Mr. Coughlin:** Happy New Year. I just want to remind everybody that RIASC is having a training session for School Committee Members this Saturday and it should be interesting because they are going to be comparing the Massachusetts model with the Rhode Island model. Good evening.

**Mr. Noonan:** It's with sadness I mention that Lou Pezzi passed away. He was a junior high school teacher when I was in junior high school and he was one of the young ones. He was a really great guy and lived very close to me. Every morning I'm a big sports fan so scouring the newspaper it was with great joy, I found that two of our own, Mr. Barboza and Mr. Barros made All State on the soccer team. It was in the Providence Journal.

Thank you for coming.

**Ms. Nordquist:** Happy New Year to everyone. Congratulations to a couple of ladies who were married recently, Kim and Christina. I

**happen to know both of the lucky men. Congratulations and I wish you all the best of luck.**

**Mr. Tenreiro: Pass, thank you.**

**XI Adjournment**

**Mr. Coughlin moved to adjourn. Ms. Bonollo seconded.**

**Voice vote passed all in favor.**

**The Chairman adjourned the regular meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee on Tuesday, January 10, 2012 at 8:04 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Clerk**

**Approved February 14, 2012**